

Paul's Points

By Paul Carmany
Collegian sports writer

It is an exciting time to be a sports fan in Northeast Ohio, with high school football on Fridays, the Buckeyes defending their national championship on Saturdays (That still sounds too good to be true!) and the Browns attempting to return to the playoffs on Sundays. The Indians' young prospects are looking better and better, and how could I forget that LeBron is signed, sealed and ready to deliver?

However, local sports enthusiasts do not need to turn on their TVs or drive all around the state to find quality teams to follow. It promises to be an exciting and entertaining year for our very own Ashland Eagle Athletic Department. Fall sports season

is already underway and four Eagle squads (men's and women's soccer and men's and women's cross country) are looking to continue their respective traditions of being among the best teams both regionally and nationally in the NCAA's Division II.

The other five teams (football, volleyball, women's tennis and men's and women's golf) are each, like the aforementioned Indians, building around a core of young talent and should be fun to watch as they develop.

Students who stayed on campus this past weekend were presented with a flurry of AU sports activity. The football, volleyball, men's and women's soccer and women's tennis teams all were in action at home.

Overall, the weekend was a successful one as the volleyball, men's soccer and women's tennis teams made their first notches in the win column this season, and the women's soccer squad posted a pair of shutouts.

Individual talent was also on display in many places.

Sophomore linebacker Devin Conwell earned GLIAC Defensive-Player-of-the-Week honors for his work against Edinboro, while Carrie Ritchie went wild on the volleyball court (see below). Charles Curren was stellar in goal for the men's soccer team, and Maria Manzo found the back of the net in both women's soccer contests.

In one of the weekend's rare road contests, Nate Iler led the men's cross country team to a second-place finish in the Ohio State Invitational, finishing runner-up and less than one second behind OSU star Rob Myers.

Game of the Week: The women's tennis team opened its 2003 season successfully with a 7-2 victory over Hillsdale Friday afternoon here at Ashland. History was made, as it was the first-ever GLIAC victory in the program's brief existence, and the tone was set for a possible breakthrough season for the Lady Eagle netters.

Athlete of the Week: Junior Carrie Ritchie, a transfer from the University of Michigan, wasted no

time endearing herself to the Ashland volleyball fans this past weekend. Showing no ill-effects of a back injury, she posted mind-numbing stats (121 kills, 68 digs) while leading her team to a 2-2 weekend. She will be nominated for this week's GLIAC and national Player-of-the-Week honors.

Must-See Game This Week: Usually this section will feature home contests, but I will take the liberty of suggesting a road game this week. The volleyball team travels to Findlay Wednesday night at 7 p.m. to open league play against the team predicted to win the GLIAC South.

The Lady Eagles have battled through an ambitious non-league slate in preparation for conference play, and this match up with their in-state rivals will be the first chance to see how the team stacks up with GLIAC competition.

The match will also feature a tantalizing individual showdown in the front row as Ritchie will battle with Kelly Pohlman, one of the top blockers in the league.



Collegian photo by April DeLallo
Carrie Ritchie serves as Jenise Smalley prepares for the return.

IMPROVE

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As for the inside, you can keep your eye on Brady Miller and Devin Conwell. A good group of secondary players are returning as well in Toure Carter, Jeff Logan, Earl Clark and Aaron

GAME

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Cornerback Toure Carter had the win within inches of his fingertips had he picked the ball up cleanly when he blocked a 40-yard field goal attempt by Eli Visnick. He would have only had the kicker and 65 yards of green grass ahead of him.

When asked about the block, Coach Keller said, "Toure played a great game, coming up big both on special teams and on defense, that's why he is one of our captains."

But the Eagles' problem was their inability to put together an extended drive. They were 4-15 on third down for a dismal 27 percent conversion rate, which led to eight punts.

And they were facing long fields all night. The unproductive return game might have had something to do with that. The Eagles had only 17 total yards on four punt returns and 48 yards on three kickoff returns. These two anemic offenses may still be playing now if not for Robinson's 66-yard touchdown run.

O'Reily. Coach Keller is very pleased with the defensive performances from his team so far and feels that he can look to these players to show the leadership that is needed to keep this defense going. Keller feels the team needs to work upon those players they have and build depth to ensure a good season.

Injuries do occur so plenty of players will have the chance to step up and should be ready for this opportunity. "Once we hit a certain standard of performance, we have to continue to show consistency in order to continue having success," says Keller. The Eagles have no place to go except up from last season and coach Keller, along with the rest of the coaching staff and the players are ready to make it happen, remembering those four core values along the way.



Collegian photo by April DeLallo

The Eagles volleyball team huddles during the Friendly's Ashland Volleyball Invitational.

New club sport at AU

By JOEY CHANDLER
Collegian sports reporter

Not since the late 70's has the sport of field hockey graced the Ashland University campus. Now, some 20 years later, the sport has found its way back. This fall, field hockey returns to campus in the form of a club team.

The idea to get field hockey back into action came from sophomore Patty Jayes of Buffalo, NY. Jayes played for her high school team and decided last spring that she wasn't ready to end her days as a field hockey player just yet. "Ever since I was introduced to the sport I have found it so fun and interesting and I wanted the girls here on campus to have an opportunity to become involved in that excitement," she said.

The team has only had three practices so far and their numbers are low, but Jayes feels optimistic about the upcoming season. "I feel very confident in the girls that we have had come out for this team. While only a few of us have played before, the girls with no previous experience are all very athletic and are catching on very fast," she said. "Our co-manager, Kari Sommer, has done an excellent job in running practices and teaching the girls the fundamentals of the game. I think by the end of the season if the team continues to gel together as well as they are now, we could be competition for those club teams that have been around for awhile."

The biggest obstacle the team faces at the moment is the low number of girls that have come out for this season. "Even though we have already had a few practices, I encourage any girl who is interested in playing field hockey to please contact me or Kari and let us know. It is such a fun sport and I think anyone who has never played before owes it to themselves to just try it at least once," says Jayes.

Anyone interested in playing can contact Jayes at extension 4829 or team co-manager Sommer at extension 4504. The ladies' first game will be held at home Sept. 13 at 2 p.m. and will be played at the intramural field by the fraternity circle.

Rec Services' fall schedule

As the 2003 fall semester gets started, so do many intramural and club sporting events through the Department of Recreational Services. The sports starting in September include tennis, flag football, kickball, golf and bowling. Students are invited to join in men's, women's and co-ed divisions. The Rec Services office is located on the second floor of the student center.

With club sports, the teams practice once or twice a week then compete against clubs from other colleges and universities. Field hockey, women's soccer, volleyball and fast-pitch softball clubs start this month. If interested in joining one of the many clubs available, contact the manager of the club or come to the Rec Services office.

There will be a whitewater rafting trip on Sept. 13. It will be a three-to-five hour trip down the Lower Yonghiogheny, and the cost is \$25 per person.

The Rec Services office is

offering various group fitness opportunities. Mondays and Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m., there will be a cardio-karate class as well as a step-aerobic class Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. There will also be a high/low aerobics at 8:00 p.m. on Sundays. The first fitness session will be held Sept. 15 and the last session will be Nov. 20, with a break on Nov. 17.

The Department of Recreational Services runs the four fitness centers on campus, along with the game room where students can play billiards, table tennis, air hockey or foosball. The game room also allows students to rent DVDs and videos.

Rec Services holds 11 special events throughout the year.

Any student interested in any of the above activities or events can stop by the Rec Services office, call them at x5440, or visit their web site at www.ashland.edu/intramurals.

Table tennis underway

By JOEY CHANDLER
Collegian sports reporter

Many exciting matches were played this past week as the intramural tennis tournament got under way. Thirty-seven men and women signed up to be a part of the action playing singles and doubles.

In the men's singles bracket, the championship match came down to a battle between Carlos Antunez and Yusurke Koizumi with Antunez winning 8-5. Rhonda Hovatter won the title of women's singles champion by defeating Arnie Rice in a match which ended 8-6.

In doubles action, Brandon Leitnaker and Travis Apple defeated Chris Stephens and Jeremy Peppard 8-0 to win the men's division. Anne LaRue and Rhonda Hovatter matched up against Karis and Arnie Rice and won the women's title 8-0. Izumi Wada and partner Tomoko Takahashi won the mixed doubles action, defeating Luke Loboda and Jen Talbott 8-1.

Be sure to keep an eye out for the upcoming intramural events. The entries for kickball will be due this Friday, Sept. 12, and the deadline for bowling is Sept. 26.

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